



CAREER-SPECIFIC VOCATIONAL TRAINING REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

ISSUED: December 21, 2022

This document contains all questions received prior to, during, and after the Pre-bid Conference, up to the Deadline for Submission of Questions.

PLEASE NOTE: The Attachment 2: Cost Proposal has been revised and is now labeled as follows:

“REVISED ATTACHMENT 2: COST PROPOSAL”

Applicants must use the REVISED ATTACHMENT 2: COST PROPOSAL provided in an email sent with this document (Response to Questions), and has been uploaded to [Procurement Opportunities | Office for People With Developmental Disabilities \(ny.gov\)](https://www.nyscr.ny.gov/login.cfm) and <https://www.nyscr.ny.gov/login.cfm> New York State Contract Reporter - Log In (ny.gov).

Applicants submitting the incorrect Cost Proposal will be disqualified.

GENERAL

Q1. Can you provide more information regarding the Grant for Career Specific Vocational Training? I read through the RFP, and it is not clear how this is different from traditional SEMP services? Can you please elaborate?

A1. While OPWDD offers a continuum of employment and vocational services, there is no existing funding for career-specific vocational training within OPWDD. Through this funding opportunity it is expected that OPWDD voluntary providers will develop or adapt an existing career-specific vocational training that will prepare people with I/DD to obtain employment in the designated career.

More information is available in the following Sections of the RFA:

1.1.3. The combination of the career-specific vocational training developed and delivered through this grant and community vocational experiences funded through the Comprehensive Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) (1915-c HCBS) Waiver will increase the marketable skills that individuals with I/DD need to meet the demands of today's employers. Having career-specific skills and community vocational experiences are the key to employment success and increasing the number of individuals competitively employed.

2.1.3. Through this funding opportunity it is expected that OPWDD voluntary Providers will develop or adapt an existing career-specific vocational training that will prepare people with I/DD to obtain employment in the designated career. Currently, there are many career-specific vocational trainings that exist, however, the training programs need to be adapted so that people with I/DD can benefit from this in-person training and develop marketable employment skills. For example, more time and more individualized instruction for skill development may be needed, or training materials may need to be presented in multiple media to enhance understanding.

2.3.2. Participants will be initially assessed by the Provider prior to the training to assure they can benefit from the career-specific vocational training. This will include an employment and vocational plan identifying the individual's desire/ interest in this specific career training before it is delivered to them. The plan will also identify the other HCBS service(s) that can supplement and reinforce the skills acquired in this career-specific training. Priority should be given to individuals who have lost their job during the pandemic. Time spent completing this assessment may be an allowable service in Prevocational Services, Pathway to Employment, Supported Employment (SEMP), or Employment Training Program (ETP). A format will be provided to successful Bidders.

2.4.2.2. The Contractor (Lead Provider) and Member Providers will work with each individual participant and the individual's Care Manager to facilitate enrollment in the OPWDD HCBS vocational and/or employment service(s) best suited to improve the outcome of competitive employment. The HCBS vocational service(s) will provide additional career planning, assessments and supplement job-related skills training and community vocational experiences related to the career-specific vocational training program.

Q2. Does OPWDD plan to make at least 1 grant per career specific per region I.E., Janitorial?

A2. There will be one (1) type of career-specific vocational training contract per region. Career-specific trainings will not be duplicated in each region. Each region may provide more than one type of training. For example, OPWDD will not award multiple janitorial training in the same region. Refer to RFA Section 2.2.2.

Q3. Is there the possibility of say 2 different grant awards in a single region i.e., one for Janitorial and a second for food service training, both in the same region?

A3. Please see response to Question 2.

Q4. Can a single career-specific vocational trainings "type" cover multiple career paths and multiple occupations/positions within a specific industry?

A4. Please see response to Question 2.

Q5. Can agencies participate in multiple bids or just one per agency?

A5. Please see response to Questions 2.

Q6. Do awards go to one (1) or more contract per region or statewide?

A6. Regional equity will be a Request for Application (RFA) evaluation and approval consideration and will be weighed along with the other criteria.

Q7. We want to confirm that "per region" limitation for each type of Career-Specific Vocational Training programs will cover the entirety of an OPWDD-region. Is that correct? For instance, for Applicants in Region 1, is the expectation that the "per region" limitation will apply to all Finger Lakes and Western NY counties? Would Providers be allowed to develop programs that are specific to subregions/subdivisions within OPWDD Regions to ensure individuals within regions would have equitable access to trainings that meet their career goals/interests?

A7. Career-specific vocational training programs can be specific to subregions/subdivisions but must meet the minimum participation requirements. The region will be defined by the Lead Provider Agency's OPWDD region. Members of the provider group do not need to be from the same OPWDD region; however, they must be in close proximity for implementation purposes. Refer to RFA Sections 2.2.2. and 2.2.3.

OPWDD regions are shown in the OPWDD Regional Offices Map located at the following link: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/06/5-regional-offices-detailed-map.pdf> (Section 2.2.3.)

- Q8. Is it the expectation that proposed trainings should cover the entirety of an OPWDD-region? Or are applicants allowed to establish vocational training location sites in counties/locations as suitable for the Lead/Member Agencies involved in the project?**
- A8. There are no restrictions on the location(s) of the training within the region, however, all costs must be included in the Delivery Plan Budget and the per person cost. Refer to RFA Section 3.3.1.2.2. Please also see response to Question 7.
- Q9. May Lead Providers and Member Providers propose to offer several versions of career-specific trainings in order to better allow for lessons focused on particular specializations within careers and/or skills development to better meet the needs local/regional employers/industries?**
- A9. One type of career-specific vocational training will be approved and funded per award. Vendors may submit multiple applications in Grants Gateway. Upon completion, some individuals may not learn every skill instructed, the information sheet prepared to share with potential employers/person and support team will list the specific tasks in which the person has developed competency. Refer to RFA Section 3.2.2.2.7.
- Q10. Can the term Regional be better defined? For example, is WNY region 1, or is it broken down to more regional providers?**
- A10. Please see response to Question 7.
- Q11. Are geographic considerations considered or flexible? The Western/Finger Lakes region has 17 counties spread out over hundreds of miles? How is region defined?**
- A11. Please see response to Question 7.
- Q12. Can you bill for SEMP and CPV while also using funds from the grant?**
- A12. Individuals participating in the Career-Specific Training Program will not be supported by HCBS Waiver staff during in-person classroom sessions. Refer to RFA Sections 2.4.1.1.5 and 3.2.2.2.3.
- Q13. Are Providers allowed to require training participants to complete a set number of hours in “community vocational experiences”—funded through HCBS Waiver services—as a condition for completing the proposed training program?**
- A13. Providers may set requirements for participants. Providers/Provider Groups will work together to coordinate the career-specific vocational training program and the related community experiences in HCBS Waiver services. Vocational experiences are required but there are no specific requirements regarding the number of hours. It is expected that best practices will be followed. Providers have flexibility in developing the delivery plan. Refer to RFA Section 2.4.1.2.
- Q14. More generally, are Providers allowed to require all training participants to concurrently engage in HCBS vocational service(s) in order to “improve the outcome of competitive employment”?**
- A14. It is required that Providers/Provider Groups implement community vocational experiences through OPWDD HCBS vocational services concurrently with the Career-Specific Vocational Training program. Please also see response to Question 13.
- Q15. To ensure HCBS Waiver services develop community vocational experiences reinforce and advance classroom trainings, it would seem that training Providers should directly collaborate with HCBS Waiver services provider staff to design appropriate career-specific/training-related community vocational experiences. To this end, are Contractors allowed to use funding to provide training/coordination stipends to HCBS Waiver services provider staff?**
- A15. Coordination and training may be included in the Delivery Plan Budget. A detailed Delivery Plan Budget includes all operating costs including the cost of delivery location, instructor, classroom aides, equipment, software, written materials, classroom space, transportation, staffing, etc. A per person cost

is developed based on the operating costs. Refer to RFA Sections 3.3.1.2, 3.3.1.2.1, 3.3.1.2.2 and 3.3.1.1.2.

Q16. Is there an opportunity to fund a position to oversee this contract?

A16. Providers/ Groups of Providers may include costs associated with project management and implementation in their budgets. Refer to RFA Sections 3.3.1.1.1 and 3.3.1.1.2.

Q17. Can OPWDD define what is considered equitable and efficient access to transportation to participate in the training program?

A17. Providers/Groups of Providers may include costs associated with transportation in their delivery plan budget. The detailed Delivery Plan Budget for each career-specific vocational training program must include all operating costs including transportation or transportation stipend, if applicable. Travel outside the Career-Specific Vocational Training program may be billed to other appropriate HCBS Waiver services according to each service's regulations. Transportation resources and options vary by person and region and should be addressed in the application submitted. Refer to RFA Section 3.3.1.1.2.

Q18. Once, a provider is approved under the grant, will the billing process continue to be under the waiver through Medicaid or will it be a different?

A18. Governor Kathy Hochul has allocated state funding for the Career-Specific Vocational Training program, as it is not an HCBS Waiver service funded by Medicaid. Billing is not processed through eMedNY. Instead, Provider/Provider Groups must adhere to established procurement processes to receive payments. Refer to RFA Sections 1.1.2., 1.2.2 and 3.3.2-3.3.2.3.

Q19. Are these Medicaid dollars in this RFA?

A19. Please see response to Question 18. The Career-Specific Vocational Training grant is New York State funded. The concurrent OPWDD HCBS vocational services and subsequent SEMP services are Medicaid Waiver funded. SEMP services in ETP are Medicaid funded, however, the wages paid through ETP are New York State funds.

Q20. Can you clarify if these are Medicaid funds? If not, where are the funds originating from?

A20. Please see response to Question 18.

Q21. How we collect the funds? Hourly rate, and how much per/h?

A21. After the initial development, the Lead Provider (vendor) will be paid per person who fully completes the program and pro-rated based on the percentage of attendance if an individual partially completes the program. Refer to RFA Section 3.3.1.2.2.

Q22. Will it be a different billing process?

A22. Please see response to Question 18.

Q23. How will billing look since there is both Medicaid and grant funding involved? What can be billed for simultaneously across both?

A23. The direct provision of the state funded Career-Specific Vocational Training program and OPWDD's HCBS vocational and employment Medicaid Waiver funded services will not overlap. Please see OPWDD HCBS service regulations for service and billing flexibility and limits.

- Q24. Can a provider provide a stipend to individuals for the training, and will there be reimbursement to the provider?**
- A24. Providers/Groups of Providers may choose to offer a stipend to individuals for the training. Providers/Groups of Providers must reflect these costs and all operating costs in their delivery plan budget (per person cost). Refer to RFA Section 3.3.1.1.2 and 3.3.1.2.2.
- Q25. Does time spent participating in this vocational training limit the ability of the agency to bill for other services provided in that day (IRA, Pre-voc, etc.)**
- A25. The state-funded grant does not impose billing limits on other OPWDD HCBS services. However, staff assisting with the Career-Specific Vocational Training classes are included in the per person training cost and cannot be billed to HCBS services during classroom participation.
- Q26. Will there be an impact when approving service authorizations for waiver services due re-allocation of dollars for this grant?**
- A26. Individuals will participate in OPWDD HCBS vocational services concurrently with the Career-Specific Vocational Training program. The Career-Specific Vocational Training classes will be in addition to other HCBS Waiver services.
- Q27. Do the people we support who will participate in this grant need to be paid if served under ETP?**
- A27. The Career-Specific Vocational Training program, in combination with OPWDD HCBS Waiver vocational services for job readiness training and community vocational experiences, will be completed prior to job development services. If an individual is enrolled in ETP they are not paid for the time attending the in-person career-specific vocational training class. The Employment Training Program may be the appropriate job development service, which includes wages paid by OPWDD.
- Q28. Will there be a change in the SARF process (fast tracking) to have someone participate in this grant?**
- A28. The typical enrollment processes must be followed. However, OPWDD will offer technical assistance if needed.
- Q29. How will incident management be handled – especially regarding levels of supervision. It's our understanding that the provider agency drops off individuals supported in this grant to the career-training provider.**
- A29. It is important that providers assess individuals and review their support and supervision needs prior to being selected for the Career-Specific Training Program. Providers must adhere to OPWDD regulation when supporting program participants.
- Q30. What accommodations are available for those who do not have equitable and efficient access to transportation?**
- A30. Please see response to Question 17.
- Q31. Is the cost of to/from transportation/staff time to bring other partner agency's individuals to our training, covered in the pricing? Or could we use something like Comm Hab to travel individuals, train them, etc.**
- A31. Please see response to Question 17.
- Q32. Will SEMP/Comm Prevoc be able to bill for transportation to the training provider's classroom/location?**
- A32. Please see response to Question 17.

- Q33. Our agency is already providing career specific training and funded through prevocational program or through ACCES-VR. Are we permitted to tap into this grant as an additional funding source or is it a separate service entirely? The difference is not clear at all amongst what is already being offered.**
- A33. Please see response to Question 1.
- Q34. Is there an example of this type of training being offered anywhere outside of NYS that can be referred to for reference or guidance?**
- A34. The Career-Specific Vocational Training Program Pre-Bid Questions from Bidders only addresses questions directly related to RFA.
- Q35. Is there any suggestion how we can join in a group with other agencies?**
- A35. Per RFA Sections 2.1.4. and 3.2.1.4.4.1., Bidders are encouraged to develop or adapt a training program in collaboration with businesses or schools that currently train people in vocational skills related to specific careers.
- Q36. A startup of \$520K/5 months = \$104K/month, versus \$600K year one operational budget/12 months = \$50K/month. And at a rate of \$2K per person, 25 persons per month in year one would need to be billed out. Twenty-five served/month x 12 months = 300 served/yr. Do these rough estimates/assumptions seem accurate?**
- A36. Please see response to Question 6.
- Q37. Revise my question with a start date of March 17, not February 2, so the startup funds must be expended between 3/17/23 and 5/31/23, as the first 12-month period of \$3MM starts 6/1/23? Or about 12 week or 3 months. \$520K/3 months = \$173K/month on average as an expenditure. This seems very high.**
- A37. The March 17, 2023 advance payment of 90% is for the development of the Career-Specific Vocational Training program. 10% will be paid when the Career-Specific Vocational Training Outline/Topics of Curriculum and Final Delivery Plan are approved. Refer to RFA Section 3.3.2.2.
- Q38. Could you elaborate more on the billing parameters associated with the grant. Specifically, it appears that if a person receiving services thru the grant, that those hours cannot be billed by the approved service provider, even if they are supporting the person at the time. Is this correct?**
- A38. Instructors and/or classroom aides instructing, attending and supporting classroom participants will be funded through the grant and not HCBS Waiver services during the classroom sessions. Refer to RFA Section 3.2.2.2.3.
- Q39. If individuals are evaluated to benefit from additional training after finishing the 75–100-hour training course, may Providers allow individuals to repeat the training course? If so, could these repeat trainings be supported through Career-Specific Vocational Training funds?**
- A39. Agencies/ Groups of Agencies will receive the full amount of reimbursement for individuals that have completed the program and pro-rated reimbursement based on the percentage of attendance if an individual partially completes the program. Individuals may repeat a class and return to complete a delayed class. Refer to RFA Section 3.3.1.2.2.

- Q40. If individuals are evaluated to benefit from additional training after finishing the 75–100-hour training course, may Providers design reinforcement/supplemental trainings to ensure successful transitions into competitive employment? If so, could the implementation of these supplement trainings be supported through Career-Specific Vocational Training funds?**
- A40. Additional training and activities needed to prepare individuals for employment within allowable services OPWDD HCBS vocational services will be provided outside of the Career-Specific Vocational Training. Refer to RFA Section 1.1.3.
- Q41. Is there a "cut off" time for submitting questions for consideration on 12/15?**
- A41. Questions may be submitted until 11:59 p.m.; however, the due date has passed.
- Q42. Due to unforeseen circumstance, I was not able to attend the pre-bid conference this morning. Was it taped by chance - if so where can I get a link to the recording?**
- A42. The pre-bid conference recording is not available. All questions received during the conference call are included in this document.
- Q43. I was unable to attend this conference, but I am very interested in getting the information! Will there be another one held or is it possible to review this back?**
- A43. Please see response to Question 42.
- Q44. What is the providers responsibility to the Person we support after the timeframe (5 months) as it pertains to their service needs?**
- A44. Since the individual is enrolled in a vocational or employment HCBS service, it is expected that the provider will continue to support the person in one of those services to obtain competitive employment. Providers must continue to update and implement the vocational and employment plans developed prior to the Career-Specific Vocational Training. When participants successfully complete the training class, job readiness training and community vocational experiences, providers will assist participants to actively seek employment through a HCBS Waiver service. Refer to RFA Section 2.3.1.
- Q45. Please elaborate on " committed to offering individuals with ID/DD full continuum of day, vocational and employment services..." There is a difference in being committed to it, but having staffing resources available to do it. Is there an expectation of growing existing programs?**
- A45. It is expected that the Lead Provider and the Member Agencies share OPWDD's commitment to providing all vocational and employment services. OPWDD will provide technical assistance to expand services or grow existing programs.
- Q46. It sounds as if the "classroom style training/ curriculum" is provided via this project and community work experiences can be funded through waiver services. Do you have any guidance on DOL regulations regarding unpaid work in this situation? (Unpaid work experience, internships, volunteerism)**
- A46. This working document examines these issues, and provides guidelines on the role of volunteer activities, internships, and unpaid work when assisting and supporting individuals with disabilities. This information is based on interpretation of various federal requirements. However, if readers have questions regarding specific situations, they should consult with the United States Department of Labor (DOL) Wage and Hour Division. In addition, NYS may have additional requirements, so it is important to also consult with the NYS state department of labor to ensure compliance with all applicable state labor laws and regulations. [SELN Unpaid Work - 2019.pdf \(pcomm.net\)](#)

Q47. Any specific targeted industries based upon in-demand industries per DOL?

A47. There are various methods to conduct region-specific job outlook research. The RFA does not specify which resources to utilize. Refer to RFA Section 3.2.2.1.6.

Q48. If it is determined after starting a program, that a significant revision of curriculum, training tools is needed is it possible to amend the contract and available funds to cover that cost?

A48. Funding for development of the training program is only available in the first fiscal year. Refer to RFA Section 3.3.1.1.1.

Q49. This question is based on some prior questions/assumptions, Is the unit cost per person trained be summed up as follows:

- **Total trained over 3 years = (1500)**
- **Total amount of monies to be utilized June 1, 2023, through June 1, 2026 (3 years) \$3M + \$8M = \$11 Million**
- **Unit cost is \$11,000,000 / 1,500 Trained = Roughly \$7,333 per person trained?**

A49. Per RFA Section 3.3.1.3., all costs must be related to the deliverables described in the Bidder's proposal as required in RFA Section 2.4. Per RFA Sections 3.3.1.2. and 5.4.2., costs must be based on the detailed Development Budget and Delivery Plan Budget, and points will be awarded for lowest cost.

Q50. After startup of 2.6M, year one operational is 3M? And years two and three are each 4M? If there are unspent dollars in our contract from year 1, 2 or 3, can they be reallocated forward?

A50. Funding amounts are allocated for each year and there is no guarantee that unspent dollars could be reallocated forward. The intent is for the planned amounts to be spent in the appropriate year.

Q51. Would OPWDD please confirm the total funding amounts available (a) for each year of the contract, (b) for developing trainings and (c) for implementing trainings?

A51. The funding amounts available each year are listed in RFA Section 2.5.

Q52. Is there a minimum number of awards to be allocated to each OPWDD region? Are there minimum funding amounts/funding ranges allocated to each OPWDD region?

A52. Please see response to Question 2 and 6.

Q53. What is the final expectation of the grant?

A53. The combination of the career-specific vocational training developed and delivered through this grant and community vocational experiences funded through the HCBS Waiver services will increase the marketable skills that individuals with I/DD need to meet the demands of today's employers. Having career-specific skills and community vocational experiences are the key to employment success and increasing the number of individuals competitively employed. Refer to RFA Section 1.1.3.

Q54. What is considered a successful outcome of the training?

A54. Providers will be paid by person upon the completion of each Career-Specific Vocational Training program. The overall goal of the career-specific vocational training program is to complete the career-specific classes funded through the grant, concurrently engage in job readiness training and community vocational experiences funding through OPWDD HCBS vocational services, then actively seek employment after completion of the training program through SEMP/ETP services.

Q55. Will the success of Career-Specific Vocational Training contracts be tied to the achievement of specific performance targets for competitive employment outcomes?

A55. The specific contract outcomes are based on the number of people who complete the Career-Specific Vocational Training program classes and corresponding vocational services to include job readiness

training classes and community vocational experiences. OPWDD will track the longer-term employment outcomes to determine future replication and utility of the program.

Q56. Is it the expectation that the completion of career-specific trainings must directly and immediately lead to competitive employment outcomes? After evaluating individuals at the end of the training, will Providers have the flexibility to recommend/determine additional job readiness activities/trainings to further prepare individuals and better ensure competitive employment outcomes?

A56. Providers should select individuals who have a career interest and potential to benefit from the Career-Specific Vocational Training. However, upon completion of the Career-Specific Vocational Training program, providers will have the flexibility to recommend employment or continued vocational services based on a person's success and skill acquisition during the program.

SECTION 1.3 – MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Q57. Pathways is a requirement of this grant. Even if authorized, not many agencies provide it for a reason. When will the revamped Pathways ADM be out?

A57. The Lead Provider Agency and all Member Agencies of the Group of Providers must be authorized by OPWDD in their OPWDD Operating Certificate to provide the following HCBS Waiver services (at a minimum): Prevocational Services, Pathway to Employment, and Supported Employment (SEMP). The Lead Provider Agency and all Member Agencies of the Group of Providers do not need to be actively delivering the aforementioned services; however, they must be committed to expanding their service offerings to provide the full continuum of employment and vocational services. Refer to RFA Sections 1.3.8 and 2.1.1. New Pathway to Employment Regulations and ADM are expected to be released in 2023.

Q58. Can the qualifications be explained again; please review the qualification for an agency to participate?

A58. Qualifications for an agency to participate are listed in Section 1.3, Minimum Qualifications.

1.3.1. The minimum qualifications that must be met for an Applicant to be considered for evaluation under this RFA are as follows:

1.3.2. Must be a Not for Profit (NFP) organization authorized to do business in New York (including NFP corporations formed under New York State Law, local government units, or organizations created by an act of the New York State Legislature for charitable purposes which include providing services to persons with developmental disabilities).

1.3.3. Must be authorized in their OPWDD Operating Certificate to provide Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) through the OPWDD Medicaid Waiver. [Home and Community Based Services Waiver | Office for People With Developmental Disabilities \(ny.gov\)](#)

1.3.4. The Lead Provider Agency and all Member Agencies of a Group of Providers must not be on OPWDD's Early Alert list at the time the application is submitted.

1.3.5. The Lead Provider Agency must be current on the submission of Consolidated Fiscal Reports (CFRs) at the time the application is submitted. The Lead Provider Agency must provide the most recent CFR schedule 2A for the purpose of demonstrating overall financial viability. Applicants may be asked to provide an interim CFR, including CFR schedule 2A, and interim financial statements.

1.3.6. The Lead Provider Agency must be registered in Grants Gateway with Prequalified Status.

1.3.6.1. In addition to Grants Gateway registration, Lead Provider Agency applicants must be Prequalified at the time and date that the application is due. Grant proposals received from NFP applicants that are not Prequalified in the Grants Gateway at the application due date and time will not be evaluated. Such proposals will be disqualified from further consideration.

1.3.6.2. For more information about Grants Gateway and Prequalification, please visit the Grants Gateway website <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/get-prequalified> or contact the Grants Gateway Team at Grantsgateway@its.ny.gov. The Grants Gateway help desk can be reached at (518) 474-5595.

1.3.6.3. In keeping with this requirement, any application from a non-governmental NFP which has a status other than one of the following at the time and date that the application is due shall not be considered eligible for this procurement:

- Document Vault Prequalified;
- Document Vault Prequalified Open;
- Document Vault Prequalified/In review; or
- Document Vault Open for PQS Edits

1.3.6.4. See Section 1.11 of this RFA for additional information pertaining to prequalification.

1.3.7. The Lead Provider Agency and all Member Agencies of the Group of Providers will apply with one (1) RFA application by region for each career-specific vocational training. However, one (1) Provider Agency must be the contract and grant management lead administrator and, therefore, prequalified in Grants Gateway. The region will be defined by the Lead Provider Agency's OPWDD region. Members of the provider group do not need to be from the same OPWDD region; however, they must be located close enough to the training location to effectively and efficiently send individuals to the training program.

1.3.8. The Lead Provider Agency and all Member Agencies of the Group of Providers must be authorized in their OPWDD Operating Certificate by OPWDD to provide the following HCBS Waiver services (at a minimum): Prevocational Services, Pathway to Employment, and Supported Employment (SEMP).

Q59. In order to participate/qualify, does an agency need authorization to provide ALL 3 of the following HCBS services: SEMP, Pathways, Prevoc? Page 7, 1.3.8

A59. The Lead Provider Agency and all Member Agencies of the Group of Providers must be authorized by OPWDD in their OPWDD Operating Certificate to provide the following HCBS Waiver services (at a minimum): Prevocational Services, Pathway to Employment, and Supported Employment (SEMP). The Lead Provider Agency and all Member Agencies of the Group of Providers do not need to be actively delivering the aforementioned services; however, they must be committed to expanding their service offerings to provide the full continuum of employment and vocational services. Refer to RFA Sections 1.3.8. and 2.1.1.

Q60. Did i hear correctly that applicants must provide pre-voc, pathway & SEMP? all 3? or just one of those services?

A60. Please see response to Question 59.

Q61. Does every group of providers need to provide the full continuum of services? If you provide all but one, will you not be able to submit a proposal unless you plan to provide the one service in addition to the other services you provide? Or as long as the group of providers are covering all services each agency (as group) can still be able to submit a proposal?

A61. Please see response to Question 59.

Q62. Does the lead provider and member agencies have to provide all three services listed? Prevocational, Pathway, and SEMP? If they only currently provide two is that permissible?

A62. Please see response to Question 59.

Q63. If Member Agency of the group of Providers does not provide Pathway to Employment, would they be able to apply/expand for that service during this process, to have it running by the time Individuals are participating in this Vocational training?

A63. Please see response to Question 59.

Q64. Can a Member Agency of the group of Providers submit a proposal if they do not provide services for Pathway to Employment, but provides Prevocational Services, Supported Employment - including the Employment Training Program (ETP) and well as assessment and various other Preemployment and Employment services through ACCESVR?

A64. Please see response to Question 59.

Q65. If we just provide SEMP, can we still qualify? or do we need to provide all three?

A65. Please see response to Question 59.

Q66. In the RFA for providing a training program for individuals with intellectual disabilities, section 1.3.8 Can the applicant only provide SEMP, or do they have to provide SEMP, Prevocational programming and Pathway to Employment to be eligible for the grant?

A66. Please see response to Question 59.

Q67. We also just want to confirm that Lead Provider Agency and all Member Agencies “must be authorized in their OPWDD Operating Certificate by OPWDD to provide the following HCBS Waiver services (at a minimum): Prevocational Services, Pathway to Employment, and Supported Employment (SEMP).” Per 3.2.1.4.1.1, it suggests that “preference will be given if either combined or singularly the full continuum of vocational and employment services is offered.” However, per 1.3.8, it would appear that offering “the full continuum of vocational and employment services” is a requirement for all Provider Agencies. Would OPWDD please confirm whether this is a “preference” or “requirement”?

A67. Please see response to Question 59.

Q68. Do partners need to be OPWDD providers?

A68. Per RFA Section 1.3.3., the Lead Provider Agency and all Member Agencies of the Group of Providers must be authorized in their OPWDD Operating Certificates to provide HCBS services. This requirement does not apply to other partners, including but not limited to businesses, colleges, industry associations, apprenticeships programs or BOCES. Refer to RFA Sections 2.1.4. and 3.2.1.4.4.1.

Q69. Can a provider agency be the provider of the career specific training?

A69. A Provider Agency may be the provider of the career-specific training; however, Providers/Groups of Providers are encouraged to develop or adapt a training program in collaboration with businesses or schools that currently train people in vocational skills related to specific careers. Refer to RFA Sections 2.1.3. and 2.1.4.

Q70. Can you partner with a CCO to assist with referrals?

A70. Yes, that would be an optional partnership.

Q71. We just want to confirm that entities other than HCBS-waiver service providers may be directly and formally involved in the provision of proposed Career-Specific Vocational Trainings. Per 2.1.4, 3.2.1.4.2.1 & 3.2.1.4.4.1, it is suggested that Applicants may partner with businesses and/or “organizations that have an already designed training program that can be adapted” in developing and providing training services. Is that correct? In other words, are applicants allowed to directly involve non-HCBS waiver providers in training development and implementation?

A71. Provider/Provider Groups may collaborate to assess and identify referrals for the Career-Specific Vocational Training and provide the HCBS Waiver vocational services for the job readiness and community vocational experiences outside of the training classes.

Providers may partner with colleges, vocational schools, businesses, industry associations, etc. to inform and/or adapt existing career-specific curriculum for individuals with I/DD served by OPWDD.

Please also see response to Question 68.

Q72. Can we support individuals who are not enrolled in SEMP/CPV but enrolled in ACCES-VR extended services or OMH, so they can also benefit from enhanced trainings?

A72. Participants in the career-specific vocational training program must be enrolled in at least one of the following: HCBS Prevocational Services, HCBS Pathway to Employment, HCBS Supported Employment (SEMP), the Employment Training Program (ETP), or state-funded SEMP for FY 23/24. In FY 24/25. Career-specific vocational training program may accept any individual enrolled in any HCBS Waiver service or state-funded services who has a vocational and employment plan and will actively seek employment after completion of the training program. Per RFA Section 2.3.1.

Q73. My understanding is that you don't have to submit a notice of intent in order to apply for the RFA, is that correct?

A73. Bidders may submit an application if they did not submit a Notice of Intent to Bid. Per RFA Section 1.9.1., a Notice of Intent to Bid is not mandatory. Bidders will be eligible to submit an application if the Bidder does not submit this form. Additionally, per RFA Section, 1.9.2., submitting this form does not obligate vendors to submit a proposal in response to the RFA.

Q74. Can the partner employer be one that is owned/operated from a provider that is truly integrated in the community?

A74. Please see response to Question 69.

Q75. What is the difference between the lead and member provider agencies? Do member providers have to be OPWDD-licensed? Can a member provider be an employer? Can we apply as one standalone provider?

A75. In regard to the first question, the Lead Member submits the application, receives payment and coordinates reimbursement to Member Providers. Refer to Sections 1.1.4, 1.1.5 and 1.1.6.

To answers to the other questions, please see the response to Questions 59, 68, 69 and 133.

Q76. Do member agencies need grant gateway prequalification?

A76. The Lead Provider Agency needs Grants Gateway Prequalification. Per RFA Section 1.3.6., the Lead Provider Agency must be registered in Grants Gateway with Prequalified Status. Per RFA Section 1.3.6.1., in addition to Grants Gateway registration, Lead Provider Agency applicants must be Prequalified at the time and date that the application is due. Grant proposals received from NFP applicants that are not Prequalified in the Grants Gateway at the application due date and time will not be evaluated. Such proposals will be disqualified from further consideration.

Q77. If we have an approved, licensed HCBS prevocational program, but no one currently enrolled, are we still eligible to apply?

A77. Please see response to Question 59.

SECTION 2 – SCOPE OF WORK, GENERAL

Q78. Would there be flexibility within person coursework or an extension of the 5-month timeframe should a person experience a health issue, significant life issue that caused them to miss class for a period of time?

A78. Agencies/Groups of Agencies will receive the full amount of reimbursement for individuals that have completed the program and pro-rated reimbursement based on the percentage of attendance if an individual partially completes the program. OPWDD will provide quarterly technical assistance regarding program implementation and challenges meeting contract training requirements. Refer to RFA Section 3.3.1.2.2.

SECTION 2.2 – SCOPE OF WORK, QUANTITY

Q79. Can you clarify the number of people to be trained; is it 1500 over the lifetime of the RFA?

A79. The actual total number of people to be trained will be based on awards. Per RFA Section 2.2.1., OPWDD estimates that 1,500 people statewide will be trained over the course of the contracts awarded.

Q80. Please clarify the expectation of number of persons trained. Is it 1500 over a 3-year period across all regions, or $1500/\text{year} \times 3 \text{ years} = 4,500$?

Q80. Per RFA Section 2.2.1., OPWDD estimates that 1,500 people statewide will be trained over the course of the contracts awarded. Per RFA Section 1.5., OPWDD will enter into a contract with responsive and responsible vendors as a result of this RFA. The term of the contract resulting from this procurement will span four (4) fiscal years, based on the New York State Fiscal Year of April 1 to March 31.

Q81. Can you clarify the number of people to be trained; is it 1500 over the lifetime of the RFA? Is OPWDD looking to split this equally between the 5 regions, thus each region would serve 300 over the lifetime or 100 per year?

A81. Please see response to Questions 6, 79 and 80.

Q82. Is the 1,500 to be served for year one, not over the 5 years? If so, the average grant would be for 1,500 persons/5 awards = 300 persons served annually for each award. The 50-person minimum is simply to establish a floor. The first 12-month annual cycle of $\$3\text{MM}/12 \text{ months} = \$600\text{K}/300 \text{ served} = \$2\text{K}/\text{person}$ on average. These are all just ballparking averages.

A82. Please see response to Question 6, 79 and 80.

Q83. Section 2.2.2. – What is the total number of career-specific training programs that OPWDD expects to award in each region?

A83. Please see response to Questions 6, 79 and 80.

Q84. Section 2.2.2. – Are providers compelled to provide transportation to individuals in order to “effectively and efficiently send individuals to the training program”?

A84. Please see response to Question 17.

SECTION 2.3 – SCOPE OF WORK, ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES

- Q85. If individuals are not enrolled in one of the five services states on page 14, 2.3.1 and instead are enrolled in a community day habilitation service or a community habilitation service, are they eligible to be enrolled in this training program? If they are enrolled in one of the five services, are you recommending that they be enrolled?**
- A85. Individuals are assessed by the Provider/Group of Providers to determine if they would be appropriate and benefit from the Career-Specific Vocational Training. If they are enrolled in the career-specific vocational training program class, they must be enrolled or enroll in an HCBS vocational service as listed in the RFA to engage in job readiness training and community vocational experiences related to the career-specific training. Refer to RFA Sections 2.4.1.2, 2.4.2.2, 3.2.2.1.5 and 3.2.2.2.5.
- Q86. If someone is enrolled in a service that isn't one of the five services but it is OPWDD eligible, can they enroll in this service?**
- A86. Please see response to Questions 59 and 85.
- Q87. Can funding go to train someone who is deemed eligible for OPWDD employment services but is otherwise currently enrolled in a non-OPWDD funded program.**
- A87. Participants in the career-specific vocational training program must be enrolled in at least one of the following: HCBS Prevocational Services, HCBS Pathway to Employment, HCBS Supported Employment (SEMP), the Employment Training Program (ETP), or state-funded SEMP for FY 23/24. In FY 24/25, the career-specific vocational training program may accept any individual enrolled in any HCBS Waiver service or state-funded services who has a vocational and employment plan and will actively seek employment after completion of the training program. The vocational and employment plan developed prior to participating (if selected) in the Career-Specific Vocational Training will also identify the other HCBS service(s) that can supplement and reinforce the skills acquired in this career-specific training. Participants can enroll in this service before or during the training. Refer to RFA Section 2.3.1 and 2.3.2.
- Q88. Will unemployed individuals receiving Intensive SEMP continue to receive approval for Intensive hours while participating in career-specific training programs?**
- A88. Intensive SEMP will be approved for certain services while the person is attending the classes. OPWDD will work together with the provider to assure the person is getting all needed services. It will need to be determined which service will fund the job readiness training and community work experiences. These services will be provided through OPWDD HCBS vocational services.
- Q89. Is there a form for the initial assessment?**
- A89. Participants will be initially assessed by the Provider prior to the training to assure they can benefit from the career-specific vocational training. This will include an employment and vocational plan identifying the individual's desire/interest in this specific career training before it is delivered to them. The plan will also identify the other HCBS service(s) that can supplement and reinforce the skills acquired in this career-specific training. Priority should be given to individuals who have lost their job during the pandemic. Time spent completing this assessment may be an allowable service in Prevocational Services, Pathway to Employment, Supported Employment (SEMP), or Employment Training Program (ETP). A format will be provided to successful Bidders. Please also see response to Question 91. Refer to RFA Sections 2.3.2. and 3.2.2.2.4.
- Q90. Can you explain more about OPWDD's approval of people to participate in these career specific vocational training programs? Will there be specific criteria being looked for? (Or things that would eliminate people?)**
- A90. Please see response to Question 89.

- Q91. OPWDD will provide a format to evaluate individuals Can this be shared prior to the application due date for consideration? Agencies may benefit from understanding the administrative expectations as they design their programs and prepare for the RFA submission.**
- A91. Providers should review the Employment Training Program (ETP) Discovery report. The elements of this Discovery Report will form the basis for the format.
- Q92. Would OPWDD be able to clarify what is meant by the “format” to be provided? Would [OPWDD] furnish a draft version of the “format” of this referenced tool for Applicants to review?**
- A92. Please see response to Question 89 and 91.
- Q93. We are hoping to have more insights on the career-specific vocational training assessment to be provided by OPWDD in order to help us design selection/enrollment/intake processes for potential programs—and to meet requirements for the Work Plan/Delivery Plan to comprehensively “describe the process the Bidder will use for selecting individuals to the training program” (3.2.2.2.4.) To that end, would OPWDD be able to furnish a draft version of the assessment? If not, would OPWDD provide additional details on the format of the career-specific vocational training assessment—such as qualifications of staff to administer, time to administer assessments, etc.?**
- A93. Please see response to Questions 89 and 91.
- Q94. Will OPWDD provide trainings to HCBS-waiver Provider staff and proposed program staff in administering the aforementioned assessment with fidelity?**
- A94. OPWDD Supported Employment voluntary provider staff and management receive extensive training through OPWDD’s Innovations in Employment Supports regarding Discovery, assessment and preparing people for employment. Because each career-specific training will be different and require different skills, creating a training for this assessment will not be possible.
- Q95. Will Providers be allowed to supplement OPWDD’s assessment with other career-specific assessment tools to ensure individuals will benefit from career-specific vocational trainings?**
- A95. Providers may implement allowable OPWDD HCBS vocational services prior and outside of the Career-Specific Vocational Training which include but are not limited to career assessments and career exploration.

SECTION 2.4 – SCOPE OF WORK, PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Q96. States Train 50 people in FY23/24 and 75 people trained each subsequent year. Clarification if that is per agency or combined per region. Example: Agency X, Y, and Z collaborate, does this mean minimum of 50 or minimum of 150 between all 3 agencies?**
- A96. A minimum of 50 people trained in FY23-24 and 75 individuals trained per year thereafter per contract awarded in each OPWDD region. A career-specific vocational training program with a minimum of 75 hours and a maximum of 100 hours of training time. This is a requirement for each contract regardless the number of Member Agencies. Refer to RFA Sections 2.4.1.1.1 and 2.4.1.1.2.
- Q97. If an agency is awarded multiple career specific vocational training programs can the 50 trained in the first year and subsequent 75 individuals be combined among the program or would each specific program have to meet the minimum number of people requirement. For example, if we were awarded 2 programs say food service and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) training would the required number be 50 or 100?**
- A97. Please see response to Question 96. Each contract is required to train 50 people in the first year of program delivery and 75 each year for the following 2 years.

Q98. Section 2.4.1.1.1. – What are the repercussions of failing to meet training outcome requirements of 50 individuals in FY 2023-24 and 75 per year thereafter?

A98. Agencies/Groups of Agencies will receive the full amount of reimbursement for individuals that have completed the program and pro-rated reimbursement based on the percentage of attendance if an individual partially completes the program. OPWDD will provide quarterly technical assistance regarding program implementation and challenges meeting contract training requirements. Refer to RFA Section 3.3.1.2.2.

Q99. Section 2.4.1.1.1. – What are the repercussions of failing to meet the outcome requirements of training 50 individuals in FY 2023-24 and 75 per year thereafter?

A99. Please see response to Question 98.

Q100. Section 2.4.1.1.1. – Will training outcome requirements be adjusted if a region has fewer career-specific vocational training programs than expected?

A100. Please see response to Question 96.

Q101. 50-74 individuals trained is the expectation. This seems like a large number of people interested in one specific vocational area. Will there be guidance/ protections in place to prevent people from being pigeon-holed into traditional jobs such as janitorial, food service, etc.? Additionally, what are the implications if that number is unable to be met?

A101. Providers are encouraged to have a number of members to meet the expected number of participants. Currently, there are 1800 individuals already on SEMP rosters who are unemployed. Providers are responsible for selecting individuals who are interested in the career based on their desires, skills and abilities. OPWDD hopes to receive bids on a wide variety of careers.

Q102. Is the “50 people trained in FY23-24 and 75 individuals trained per year thereafter” a required contractual performance target/outcome? Or is it programmatic capacity requirement? In other words, do Applicants need to ensure that 50 people in Year 1 and 75 people in Years 2 & 3 are trained? Or do Applicants need to ensure that their program has enough “seats” to train at least 50 people in Year 1 and 75 people in Years 2 & 3?

A102. Please see response to Question 96.

OPWDD will consider full completion of the training program as well a partial completion to meet the training requirements. However, OPWDD will provide quarterly technical assistance regarding program implementation and challenges meeting contract training requirements.

Q103. If “50 people trained in FY23-24 and 75 individuals trained per year thereafter” is contractual performance requirement for the program, how will OPWDD measure partial completion of a training in terms of meeting these outcomes? For instance, if an individual completes 50% of a training and subsequently leaves the training, will this count towards meeting contractual goals?

A103. Please see response to Questions 96 and 102.

Q104. Are the hours noted (75 to 100) meant to include any community-based experiences?

A104. These hours are not meant to include community-based experiences. Community-based vocational experiences are funded through the HCBS Waiver Service(s) the individual receives in addition to the Career-Specific Vocational Training program. The Lead Provider or Group of Provider Agencies will work together to coordinate both. Refer to RFA Sections 2.4.2.2. and 3.2.2.1.5.

- Q105. Section 2.4.1.1.2. – Does the minimum (75hrs) and maximum (100hrs) training amount include classroom instruction only or would participation in on-the-job training or other practical experience count towards 75-100hrs of training time?**
- A105. Please see response to Question 104.
- Q106. Can vocational instruction ever be virtual?**
- A106. The Contractor (Lead Provider) shall adapt/design/develop an in-person, career-specific vocational training program. Refer to RFA Sections 2.1.3 and 2.4.1.1.
- Q107. Is OPWDD looking to split this equally between the 5 regions, thus each region would serve 300 over the lifetime or 100 per year?**
- A107. Please see response to Question 6.
- Q108. Are the hours noted for vocational training, 75 minimum to 100 maximum, meant to include additional hours of work readiness training (e.g. resume preparation or interviewing skills)?**
- A108. The 75 to 100 hours are designated for career-specific vocational in-person training and the topics should be specifically related to the skill development for that career. Job readiness skills and resume preparation may be billed to the appropriate HCBS Waiver service. Hours outside of the Career-Specific Vocational Training include job readiness training and community vocational experiences provided and billed through HCBS Waiver services such as Pathway to Employment, Community Based Prevocational services or SEMP/ETP. The Lead Provider or Group of Provider Agencies may create a liaison function to coordinate services delivered within the Career-Specific Vocational Training Program and those delivered within other HCBS Waiver services. Refer to RFA Sections 2.4.1.2, 2.4.2.2, 3.2.2.1.5 and 3.2.2.2.5.
- Q109. How were the hours of training determined? 75 min, 100 max over a 5-month period?**
- A109. Please refer to RFA Section 2.4.
- Q110. Section 2.4.1.1.2. – Does the minimum (75hrs) and maximum (100hrs) training amount include classroom instruction only or would participation in on-the-job training also count towards training time?**
- A110. Please see response to Question 104.
- Q111. Section 2.4.1.1.3. – Does this time period include practical experience prior to actual hire, such as an internship?**
- A111. Please see response to Questions 13, 14 and 44.
- Q112. Section 2.4.1.1.3. – Does the 5-month training time period include practical experience prior to actual hire, such as an internship or unpaid work experience?**
- A112. Please see response to Questions 13, 14 and 44.
- Q113. Section 2.4.1.1.1. – Will training outcome requirements be adjusted if a region has fewer career-specific vocational training programs than expected?**
- A113. Please see response to Question 79.
- Q114. Individuals may not be supported by waiver staff. Is there flexibility with this, (maybe with prior approval)? Without knowing who the individuals are, or what their support needs are it is incredibly difficult to design/ adapt a program that can be flexible with support levels for this population- especially with numbers of 75 per year.**
- A114. Individuals may have staff who they are familiar with as classroom aides or instructors; however, the staff wages are paid by the grant and included in the per person cost. Preference is given to provider groups so

there are more supports and referrals for the training program. Refer to RFA Sections 2.4.1.1.5, 3.2.2.2.3. 3.2.1.3.1 and 3.2.1.3.2

Q115. Will OPWDD please provide further explanation as to HCBS Waiver staff are not allowed to support individuals during classroom training sessions?

A115. Please see response to Question 114.

Q116. Would the person supported need to be fully independent in order to participate in the training given that OPWDD staff cannot be present? 2.4.1.1.5.

A116. Please see response to Question 114. Additionally, per RFA Section 2.1.4., since voluntary Provider(s) know and understand the needs of the people with I/DD that they currently serve, it is expected that they could add this expertise to the development or adaptation.

Q117. With regards to including the planned ratio of instructors/ aides: individuals- Without knowing the support / learning needs of individuals this is very difficult to predict. If a person requires an ASL interpreter that would be a significant expense to consider. Would your recommendation be to include the cost of an ASL interpreter into the proposal in case it's needed, or could that be discussed when the need arises?

A117. If Career-Specific Vocational Training participants require accommodations, Provider/Provider Groups should project costs and include in the budget costs. Curriculum adaptation should take into consideration universal design for multiple disabilities in addition to setting aside potential accommodations costs. Refer to RFA Sections 2.4.1.1.5 and 3.2.2.2.3.

Q118. Can existing waiver staff Travel to and from training sites without it conflicting with section 2.4.1.1.5. "Individuals attending will not be supported by HCBS Waiver staff during the classroom sessions." Assume the same staff, Travel is billed to Pre-Voc or SEMP Waiver and staff time in classroom recouped through RFA fee for service.

A118. Please see response to Question 17.

Q119. What does the minimum 75 hours/max 100 hours entail? Travel time, paperwork included?

A119. A detailed Delivery Plan Budget includes all operating costs including the cost of delivery location, instructor, classroom aides, equipment, software, written materials, classroom space, transportation, staffing, etc. A per person cost is developed based on the operating costs. Refer to RFA Sections 3.3.1.2, 3.3.1.2.1, 3.3.1.2.2 and 3.3.1.1.2.

Q120. Do applicants have to provide a sample employment and vocational plan in the application?

A120. Provider agencies will assess each applicant and review or develop an employment and vocational plan for each participant selected prior to attending the Career-Specific Vocational Training. The plans will be updated throughout the training period while the person is participating in HCBS vocational services. Time spent completing this assessment and plans may be an allowable service in Prevocational Services, Pathway to Employment, Supported Employment (SEMP), or Employment Training Program (ETP). Refer to RFA Section 2.3.2.

Q121. What is the responsibility of the partner business?

A121. Within the Career-Specific Vocational Training program, there are a variety of possible roles for a potential business partner which can be developed by the Provider/Provider Groups. The role must be detailed in the Career-Specific Vocational Training delivery plan. Refer to RFA Section 3.2.1.4.4.1.

SECTION 2.5 – SCOPE OF WORK, TIMELINE OF DELIVERABLES

Q122. Section 2.5 - Will funds be awarded evenly across all regions?

A122. Please see response to Questions 2 and 6.

Q123. Section 2.5 – Will money for development and service delivery be evenly split among regions?

A123. Please see response to Question 6.

Q124. Is the money outlined on page 16 allotted annually per region or statewide?

A124. Please see response to Question 6.

Q125. The RFP, page 16 has \$2.6MM for a 5-month time period, the startup? If there are 5 awards, then on average, that is about \$520K each for 5 months, or a spend rate of about \$104K month just in start-up. And then the first 12-month cycle starts 6/1/23 with 3MM/5 awards = \$600K/yr. on average? Is this accurate?

A125. Please see response to Question 49.

Q126. The timeline of deliverables is out of synch with any fiscal year known to providers. Most agencies use a July 1 FY start date. What is the rationality behind a June 1 contract start date and is it possible to amend the start date to align with July 1?

A126. OPWDD follows the New York State fiscal year which begins April 1. The anticipated contract start date is March 17, 2023 (Sections 1.4 and 2.5). Per RFA Section 3.3.2.1., an advance payment of 90% of the total cost for Career-Specific Vocational Training Development will be made March 17, 2023. Program implementation and delivery are anticipated to begin June 1, 2023 (Section 2.5).

Q127. Does the \$2.6 Million (or roughly \$520K if 5 awards) need to be utilized and spent down within roughly 3 months, by May 2023? Can funds be carried over and utilized in subsequent years of the contract?

A127. Please see response to Questions 37 and 50.

Q128. Is the first round of funding received (for curriculum development) include in the per-person cost?

A128. The first fiscal year of funding includes the advance payment of 90% of the total cost for Career-Specific Vocational Training **Program Development** only (Section 3.3.2.1.). The second through fourth fiscal year funding is based on the amount the vendor will be paid per person (Section 3.3.1.2.2.).

Q129. What is the timeframe for costs covered under the Development Budget? Is it only the 2.5- month period between contract start date and training implementation as suggested/outlined in 2.5 (March 17, 2023-June 1, 2023)? Or can Development costs extend into the June 1, 2023-March 2026 "implementation" period?

A129. Please see response to Questions 37 and 50.

SECTION 2.6 – SCOPE OF WORK, REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Q130. Are reports able to be shared for consideration prior to RFA submission due date? Additionally, for what period of time are agencies expected to track employment outcomes after completion of the class? If they complete the class, then go to a " partner agency" for employment supports it could take months for them to find a job and getting the required information for reporting could be difficult.

A130. Quarterly Reports and/or class cohort reporting including narrative on progress. Quarterly Reports on the numbers and status of individuals in the training, the status of their volunteer/work experience, status of enrollment in HCBS Waiver services. Outcome reporting on individuals obtaining competitive employment and tracking of progress. OPWDD will continue to follow up on the training cohort for an extended period

of time to track employment outcomes. OPWDD will provide a reporting form to track progress and employment outcomes for successful Bidders. Refer to RFA Section 2.6.1.1, 2.6.1.2 and 2.6.1.3.

Q131. Will OPWDD please provide potential Applicants with a draft reporting form for the quarterly progress reports/outcome reports to ensure Bidders are incorporating proper data collection mechanisms in their proposed Delivery Plan? Relatedly, will OPWDD please confirm the expected outcomes tied to reporting and contractual goals?

A131. Please see response to Question 130.

Q132. What supporting documentation will Lead Providers need to provide in submitting claims for quarterly reimbursement?

A132. OPWDD will require a final roster including participant information including who completed the program or percentage of completion for those who did not complete the program. The form and format will be provided by OPWDD upon contract execution. In addition, the Provider must be up to date on submitting their quarterly report.

SECTION 3 – PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, GENERAL

Q133. Is there a preference to fund proposals that come from collaborative groups rather than individual agencies?

A133. OPWDD is encouraging Providers to work together as a group for the benefit of the individuals they serve (RFA Section 1.1.5.). Preference will be given to a Group of Providers (3.2.1.3.1.) and preference will be given to a Group of Providers working regionally (3.2.1.3.2.).

Q134. If applying as a “Group of Provider Agencies,” what documentation is required at submission to document partnerships? Will Letters of Intent/Letters of Agreement suffice? Or does OPWDD expect more formal MOUs at the application stage?

A134. Letters of Agreement or Intent are adequate and should identify the lead contact at every member agency.

Per RFA Section 2.4.1.4, the Contractor (Lead Provider) shall enter into an agreement with the other Provider Agencies (Member Providers). The agreement, at a minimum, shall identify the parties, detail responsibilities for each party, and outline the project details.

Q135. Where should applicants attach partnership agreements/MOU in the application?

A135. Applicants may upload Letters of Agreement or Intent to the Work Plan section of the Program Specific Questions, as required in RFA Section 3.2.2.1.1.

Q136. Does OPWDD have guidelines and/or an agreement format/template for documenting partnerships between the Lead Provider/Applicant and Member Agencies?

A136. The Lead Provider/Applicant may determine the format and ensure the agreement includes required information listed in RFA Section 2.4.1.4.

Q137. Ownership of work products - if an organization already has existing curriculum that is to be used for vocational training, it is amended or adapted via this contract- does that mean the organization will no longer have permission to use it after completion of this project?

A137. OPWDD will not assume ownership of the work product. Please see Addendum 1, number 4 to the RFA.

Q138. Section 3.1.3. OPWDD assumes ownership of all materials upon completion of the grant. If working with educational institution to provide training, would this entity be expected to turn over their curriculum?

A138. Please see response to Question 137.

Q139. If the training program we modify is owned by another entity, how would the modification then become property of OPWDD? 3.1.3

A139. Please see response to Question 137.

Q140. Does this include software/material prior to submission of the award contract (including materials created by lead provider)? During the drafting of the contract, what specific material would OPWDD take ownership over?

A140. OPWDD will not take ownership of software/materials created by the lead provider prior to the submission of the contract.

The Delivery Plan Budget may include operating costs including the cost of delivery location, instructor, classroom aides, equipment, software, written materials, classroom space, transportation, staffing, etc. These materials must be identified in the RFP and may be acquired and adapted during the development period. Refer to RFA Sections 3.3.1.2, 3.3.1.2.1, 3.3.1.2.2 and 3.3.1.1.2. However, OPWDD will not assume ownership of the work product. Please see Addendum 1, number 4, to the RFA.

Q141. Section 3.1.3. – Why must OPWDD assume ownership of “work product” (i.e., intellectual property) of providers upon completion of the contract period?

A141. Please see response to Question 137.

Q142. Will copyright consideration be considered upon completion of grant and what would become the property of OPWDD?

A142. Please see response to Question 137.

Q143. As stated in 3.2.1.4.4.1 and elsewhere “preference will be given to Providers that adapt an existing curriculum or that partner with organizations that have an already designed training program.” If successful Bidders use a curriculum that was originally developed and owned by other entities, it seems unlikely that they would legally be able convey the “rights, title, and interest” of this curricula to OPWDD or any other third-party? Would OPWDD please advise as to how Bidders would meet this requirement when using curriculum developed and owned by “colleges, community colleges, SUNY/CUNY, private industry employer, industry associations, Department of Labor or Empire State Development, apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship programs, BOCES, or proprietary schools”?

A143. Please see response to Question 137.

Q144. If new curricula are developed under the contract by Provider Agencies, would these Provider Agencies lose the right to continue to use the curricula at the conclusion of the grant? Will OPWDD provide assurances that Provider Agencies would be allowed to continue to use their developed curricula in order to continue their successful training model after the conclusion of the contract?

A144. Please see response to Question 137.

Q145. Can we have several training location within multiple locations in the same specific career path?

A145. Please see response to Question 7.

Q146. Can we provide both group and one-on-one instruction at the training location?

A146. There are no restrictions on a combination of individual and group training, however, all costs must be included in the Delivery Plan Budget and the per person cost. Refer to RFA Section 3.3.1.2.2.

SECTION 3.1. – PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, ADMINISTRATIVE PROPOSAL

Q147. Do Provider Agency partners need to furnish any signed copies of the certifications/assurances/attestation documents to be included with the application—i.e., the certifications/assurances listed in pages 87-89 of the RFA (Attachments 1-15)? Or does it suffice that the Applicant/Lead Provider solely to submit all required certifications/assurances/attestation documents?

A147. The Bidder/Applicant/Lead Provider must submit all required certifications/assurances/attestation documents with the application. It is not a requirement for Member Providers/Partners to submit these documents.

Q148. If Provider Agency partners need to furnish any signed copies of the certifications/assurances/attestation documents at the time of application, would OPWDD please provide guidelines on which documents should be included? In particular, would OPWDD provide guidance on whether Attachment 3: Non-Collusive Bidding Certification should be completed by Provider Agency partners and, if necessary, how to proceed in completing this documentation?

A148. Please see response to Question 147.

SECTION 3.2. – TECHNICAL PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, GENERAL

Q149. I was hoping OPWDD would provide additional guidance on what constitutes the Technical Proposal and how it is to be formatted/submitted through the online application in Grants Gateway. If Applicants/Bidders respond to all of the “Program Specific Questions” prompts in sequence in the Grants Gateway application, are Applicants/Bidders complying with the requirements to “follow the prescribed [Technical Proposal] format and, thus, to create complete Technical Proposals for review? In other words, is developing thorough responses to the “Program Specific Questions” the equivalent of preparing a complete Technical Proposal? If not, please advise what applicants must provide to ensure a complete Technical Proposal is prepared.

A149. Bidders must respond to each of the Program Specific Questions. Bidders must also complete the Work Plan Properties section of the Application. The information entered here will carry over to the contract. Per RFA Section 1.11.2., detailed instructions are available at <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/resources-grant-applicants> for meeting and completing the following requirements:

1.11.2.1. Registering your organization

1.11.2.2. Getting Prequalified

1.11.2.3. Applying for a Grant

1.11.2.4. Managing Contracts

1.11.3. Help Desk

1.11.4. In addition to the support resources available to Grants Gateway users such as manuals, videos, webinars, and FAQs, Grants Management provides live help desk support for Grants Gateway users.

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Phone: (518) 474-5595

Email: grantsgateway@its.ny.gov

1.11.5. An after-hours support desk is available weekdays between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. for account lockouts and basic questions at (800) 820-1890 or helpdesk@agatesoftware.com.

Per RFA Section 3.2., the Technical Proposal must provide the following:

- Bidder Qualifications and Experience (Section 3.2.1.), including responses to RFA Sections 3.2.1.3. through 3.2.1.4.7.1.

- Work Plan (Section 3.2.2.) including Career-Specific Training Program Development (Section 3.2.2.1.), including responses to RFA Sections 3.2.2.1.1. through 3.2.2.1.9., and Career-Specific Training Program Delivery (Section 3.2.2.2.) , including responses to RFA Sections 3.2.2.2.1. through 3.2.2.2.8.
- Timeline of Deliverables (Section 3.2.2.3.), including response to RFA Section 3.2.2.3.1.
- Diversity Practices (Section 3.2.2.), including Attachment 13: Diversity Practices Questionnaire.

The Program Specific Questions in Grants Gateway follows the RFA and includes the Technical Proposal format described in this response above.

Bidders may utilize the text boxes or upload an attachment for each Program Specific Question. If the Bidder's complete response is longer than 4,000 characters, the Bidder could use the attachment function to upload their complete answer and leave the text box blank.

Q150. I was hoping to get clarity on whether OPWDD expects/prefers applicants to use the text boxes or the attachment function in "Program Specific Questions" in Grants Gateway. All text boxes under "Program Specific Questions" seem to be limited to 4,000 character responses. Should Applicants/Bidders limit their responses to information that can be presented in 4,000 characters text boxes? Are Applicants/Bidders expected/allowed to use the attachment function under each "Program Specific Questions" to supplement and/or replace responses in the text boxes?

A150. Applicants may use either one or the other, or they may use both the text boxes and the attachment function when responding to Program Specific Questions. If Bidders upload a response, they are encouraged to enter a note to "see uploaded attachment" in the text box.

Q151. If Applicants/Bidders use the attachment functions in Grants Gateway's "Program Specific Questions" portion to upload supplemental materials relating to text box responses, will these attachments factor into the scoring of the Technical Proposal? Or are only responses included in the text boxes evaluated in Technical Proposal scoring?

A151. Attachments that are uploaded will factor into the scoring of the Technical Proposal along with the responses included in the text boxes.

Q152. Would OPPWD please clarify what should be provided in the "Work Plan" section of the Grants Gateway proposal? Specifically, I am seeking clarity on whether Applicants should be using Grants Gateway's "Work Plan" section to cover items in the RFA/Technical Proposal's "Work Plan" description (i.e. section 3.2.2, on pages 27-29 of the RFA). The "Program Specific Questions" seem to already encapsulate the items outlined under RFA's 3.2.2 section. So, should Applicants use Grants Gateway "Work Plan" section to cover the items in RFA 3.2. Or should Applicants merely respond to the separate "Work Plan" prompts included in Grants Gateway?

A152. The Work Plan Properties will be scored by evaluators as part of the Technical Proposal. Bidders must enter the required elements (goals, objectives and desired outcomes with corresponding deliverables, tasks/activities, performance measures, milestones and timeline) as outlined in RFA Section 3.2.2. directly into the Work Plan Properties of the Grants Gateway Application.

Bidders may supplement the Work Plan Properties entry with an uploaded attachment in the Program Specific Review section.

Q153. Would OPWDD please provide guidance on how Applicants should complete the "Objectives, Tasks and Performance Measures" section the Grants Gateway section? Are there contract-specific Objectives, Tasks and Performance Measures that should be considered in this section of Grants Gateway application?

A153. Please see response to Question 149 for technical guidance. Bidders must enter the Objectives, Tasks and Performance Measures specific to their proposal as required in RFA Section 3.2.2.

SECTION 3.2.2. – PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, WORK PLAN

Q154. Are responses in Grants Gateway “Work Plan” section of the application factored into the evaluation and scoring of the Technical Proposal?

A154. Per RFA Section 3.2.2., the Work Plan will be scored by evaluators as part of the Technical Proposal. Per RFA Section 5.3.2., the Work Plan is included in the Technical Requirements for scoring.

Q155. This references a " sheet" to be provided to potential employers upon completion of the program. Is this referencing a sheet highlighting skill attainment or a general description of the training program or other?

A155. The intention is that specific skill attainment will be described in the information “sheet” which may be provided to potential providers. The purpose of this sheet is to help a potential employer fully understand the skills the person has obtained and therefore aid in job development.

SECTION 3.3. – PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, COST PROPOSAL

Q156. Can you verify any of the following be included in the budget: incentives to participate/ complete the classes, transportation subsidy or stipend (and to whom it could be paid-parent, agency, etc.). If technology is purchased for use in the program, does it get turned over to OPWDD upon completion of the coursework (laptops, projectors, etc.)

A156. Please see response to Question 24.

Per Clause IV.D.1. of the Master Contracts for Grants, property is real property, equipment, or tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$1,000 or more per unit. b) If the State consents in writing, the Contractor may retain possession of Property owned by the State, as provided herein, after the termination of the Master Contract to use for similar purposes. Otherwise, the Contractor shall return such Property to the State at the Contractor’s cost and expense upon the expiration of the Master Contract.

Q157. In calculating Per Person Cost, Applicants should use their estimated number of participants per year. Is that correct? Or should Per Person Cost be based on the estimated total capacity of the program—i.e., the number of individuals that could be trained under ideal circumstances?

A157. The cost per person in addition to the number of people the Applicant is proposing to serve is listed in Attachment 2: Cost Proposal. Refer to RFA Section 2.4.1.1.1 and 5.4.2.

Q158. If Providers are in position to exceed the projected number of people trained in a given contract/fiscal year, will Providers be able to receive reimbursement for individuals served in excess of Cost Proposal Estimates? Or will the Applicant’s proposed Delivery Plan Budget cap the total amount available per year under the contract?

A158. This may be approved if requested in advance within the contract year.

Q159. Will pro-rated payments for partial completion solely be determined by classroom attendance? Are Applicants to suggest milestones for partial completion? Will partial completions of trainings count to help Providers meet any contractual performance requirements for the number of individuals trained?

A159. Please see response to Question 98.

Q160. Are Applicants allowed to include ongoing development expenses related to revising and refining trainings under the Delivery Plan?

A160. 3.3.1.1.1. A detailed **Development Budget** for the career-specific vocational training program including cost of purchasing or developing the training program, staff time to develop or adapt training program with Member Agencies or partners (sub-contractors), project management, a delivery plan and an outline of the liaison/coordination function plan and other associated costs with the development of a training

program with a minimum of 75 hours and a maximum of 100 hours of career-specific vocational training over no more than a five (5) month period.

Costs for revising and refining trainings should be included in the Delivery of Training budget, if applicable. Please also see response to Question 119.

Q161. Per 3.2.2.3.1. and elsewhere, it is suggested that the “Delivery of Training” should factor in training implementation/operations cost for three periods: (a) 6/1/23 – 3/31/24; (b) 4/1/24 – 3/31/25; and (c) 4/1/2025 – 3/31/26. The Cost Proposal (Attachment 2) has a 4th row for 4/1/2026 – 3/31/26. Is that row for a 4th training implementation/operations period for which applicants should provide a budget? Or was that 4th row included in error?

A161. The first period is for development, the next 3 periods are for the delivery of the Career-Specific Vocational Training program implementation. Refer to RFA Section 2.1.5.

Please see Addendum 1 to the RFA. The Cost Proposal has been amended to remove the 4th row.

Applicants MUST use the REVISED ATTACHMENT 2: COST PROPOSAL. Applicants submitting the incorrect Cost Proposal will be disqualified.

PLEASE NOTE: The Attachment 2: Cost Proposal has been revised and is now labeled as follows:

“REVISED ATTACHMENT 2: COST PROPOSAL”

Applicants must use the REVISED ATTACHMENT 2: COST PROPOSAL provided in an email sent with this document (Response to Questions), and has been uploaded to [Procurement Opportunities | Office for People With Developmental Disabilities \(ny.gov\)](#) and <https://www.nyscr.ny.gov/login.cfm> New York State Contract Reporter - Log In (ny.gov).

Applicants submitting the incorrect Cost Proposal will be disqualified.